



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 February 2021

by R E Jones BSc (Hons), DipTP, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/20/3260979

27 Child Street, Lambourn, Hungerford RG17 8NZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Wills against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00920/FUL, dated 4 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed single storey side extension to provide private apartment (to be rented in the short term to local residents) to be used by elderly residents once a two-storey home becomes unusable'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including its location within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a modern residential housing estate that forms part of the village of Lambourn, which is within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
4. The dwellings on the estate comprise two storey properties that are consistent in terms of their scale and built form. They are positioned within plots with rear gardens and frontage parking that follow similar space arrangements. The uniformity in the scale of the dwellings and the spaces around them is an appreciable feature of the estate and these combine to create an attractive residential environment.
5. The proposed house would adjoin the flank wall of No 27 Child Street (No 27) and would have a roof line that would be set below its roof eaves, while having a front elevation that would contain a single window and entrance door. The proposal's height and modest projection from No 27's flank wall would make the structure appear squat and diminutive in comparison with the taller and wider two storey dwelling it would adjoin, along with those nearby. Moreover, the single window and door would give the proposed house a peculiar appearance in the context of the larger house frontages in the estate. Therefore, rather than a cohesive addition to the estate, the proposal would appear inconsistent and materially out of place, and consequently harmful to the wider residential character of the area.
6. It is not clear from the submitted drawings the extent of private garden space the proposal would retain, however, No 27 is an end plot with a large side and rear

garden, that if sub-divided, would allow sufficient amenity and circulation space for the needs of future occupiers of the proposal and for the existing inhabitants of No 27. On this basis the proposal would be unlikely to appear cramped or over-developed within the site.

7. Policy ADPP5 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Development Plan Document, adopted July 2012 (Core Strategy) makes it clear that the conservation and enhancement of the AONB, including its special qualities, will be given great weight. One of these qualities relates to local distinctiveness, while the historic form of the built environment within the AONB settlements should be respected. The scale of development is not significant in relation to the AONB as a whole and there would be no encroachment into the open countryside. Nevertheless, the detrimental impact on the distinctiveness of this part of the settlement would also result in the failure to conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB. This adds to the harm caused by the development.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and would consequently fail to conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. It would be contrary to Policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy and Policy C3 of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2006-2026), adopted May 2017. These, amongst other things, require proposals to respect local character in terms of location, scale and design, as well as preserving or enhancing the special qualities of the AONB. I have also had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework where Paragraph 172 attaches great weight to the conservation of AONBs.

Other Matters

9. The appellants have indicated that at some point in the future, the proposed house would be used as a residence for themselves, with some form of physical integration with No 27 to enable care purposes undertaken by family members at that property. Yet, it is not clear whether that future use would take the form of a separate private dwelling to No 27. Moreover, I have no mechanism before me for consideration to ensure that the future use would be secured following the cessation of the initial residential let.
10. The proposal would result in the contribution of an additional dwelling to the local housing stock, while it could be rented at an affordable value. Although there would be some modest benefits arising in this respect, they would nevertheless not overcome the significant harm I have identified above.
11. The appellant has referred to a two-storey side addition at a nearby property and sights its lack of windows as having an impact on the character of the area. However, it would be difficult to draw similarities between that addition and the appeal scheme, given that the proposal before me is for a separate dwelling, rather than a house extension. In any event, I have determined the proposal on its own individual merits.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

RE Jones

INSPECTOR